Motherhood-Career Transition – A Study of Implications on Workforce Participation

SHORT SYNOPSIS

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FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES

Certificate

I hereby declare that the short synopsis "Motherhood-Career Transition – A Study of Implications on Workforce Participation" being submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in management under faculty of management of Manav Rachna International Institute of Research & Studies, Faridabad during the academic year 2018-19.

It is a bona fide record of original work carried out under the supervision of Dr.Deepti Dabas and has not been submitted in full or part to any other university or institute for degree or diploma. Further, it is certified that short synopsis is plagiarism free and proof has been submitted.

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ABSTRACT

Despite the economic growth, women in the Indian workforce reported low in numbers as compared to other countries. The numbers of successful women who break the glass ceiling are very less in number. In India, women are the primary caregiver of child and family, thus professional work is a mere extension of their role and responsibilities. Working mother faces lots of challenges to get retain back to the career, the reason may vary from lack of social support and unsupportive organization policy framework. The study is intended to analyze various factors that affect career decision of working mothers. The respondents shall be interacted with work-motherhood transition phase and its impact on their career decisions. In this study, we would be reviewing childcare support, family support; socio-culture norms and organizational policy framework about work-motherhood transition phase and evaluate the impact of such factors in workforce participation. Through this study, we would highlight the effectiveness of existing maternal policy framework and identify the requirement of any, an extended supportive mechanism to reduce the opt-out decisions of mothers from the workforce.

Keywords: Transition, motherhood, workforce, organisational policies

CONTENTS

S.No.	Description	Page No.
1	**Introduction**	**1-11**
	1.1 Labour Force in India	
	1.2 India's Workforce Distribution	
	1.3 Indian Women in Workforce: Trends and Facts	
	1.4 Role of Work Environment on Motherhood	
	1.5 Participation of Women in Service Sector	
2	**Literature Review**	**11-17**
	2.1 Motherhood-Career Transition	
	2.2 Motherhood and Career Transition phase	
	2.3 Research Gap	
3	**Description of Topic**	**18-19**
	3.1 Motherhood	
	3.2 Motherhood as Career Constraint	
4	**Objectives of the Study**	**20**
5	**Methodology Adopted**	**20-22**
	5.1 Research Design	
	5.2 Qualitative and Quantitative Research	
	5.3 Universe	
	5.4 Sampling Design	
	5.5 Method of Data Collections	
	5.6 Analysis of Data	
6	**Proposed outcome of the research**	**23**

1. INTRODUCTION

By the year 2020, the average Indian age will be 29 years of age making India world's youngest nation (Financial Express, 2017). India is in the phase of demographic dividend, where dependent population is lesser compared to the labor force. With its vast diverse regional and religious differences, it becomes competitively important to hold such disproportionate populations and create an inclusive diverse workforce. When it comes to the gender-specific workforce, India is at the bottom of the list for female labor participation. As per the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), during 1983 to 2011-12, there has been a notable declining trend among female in labor participation while male participation remains stable. It's an upsetting situation when half of India's population i.e females are almost missing from the labor force.

1.1 Labour Force in India

Definition: As per Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India (2017) - labour force has been defined as "the number of people either employed or unemployed i.e actively seeking a job or work". National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO), 2001 defines "three broad activity status:

i) Working (engaged in economic activity) i.e. 'Employed'
ii) Seeking or available for work i.e. 'Unemployed'
iii) Neither seeking nor available for work.

All those individuals having a broad activity status as i) or ii) above are classified as being in the labour force and those having activity status iii) are classified as outside the labour force. Thus labour force constitutes of both employed and unemployed."NSSO further categorize **work participation rate** as the percentage of total workers (main and marginal) to total populations.

Saran and Sharan (2018) described in their paper that India population will grow massively by the year 2050 and estimated to reach 323 million, which will be the largest increase among any country. There will be 600 million people who will join India's workforce

by the year 2030. Currently, India is having a young population with an average age of 27.9 years old as compared to 38.1 years of U.S. Majority of Indian workforce are engaged with the agriculture sector and rest are distributed among industrial & service sector.

Since 1990, countries like India and Bangladesh had an economic boost with a high rate of growth. An analysis of data presented by the labour bureau for the period 2012-2015 states that approximately 4.75 million people joined India's labour force.

Labour Force in India (in millions)				
Year	Male	Female	Total	Addition
2012	337.68	106.01	451.56	
2013	341.82	96.63	444.78	-6.79
2014	339.6	113.03	469.65	24.87
2015	354.06	107.59	465.8	-3.85
			Average	4.75

Table 1: Labour Force in India

Source – Ministry of Labour & Employment Labour Bureau (2014).

From the above table, we can estimate that there was a downward trend among females in labor force participation. The world development indicators reveal that in the year 2015, India had workforce of 503.8 million and it has been estimated that average annually 5-7 million people are adding to the workforce.

In the year 2015, the total labor force participation rate (LPR) was 50.3% which is declined from 52.5% in 2014 as per the Employment –Unemployment survey 2015 conducted by the Labour Bureau. In the year 2015, there is notable downtrend among female participating in the labor force which further depicted in the below table.

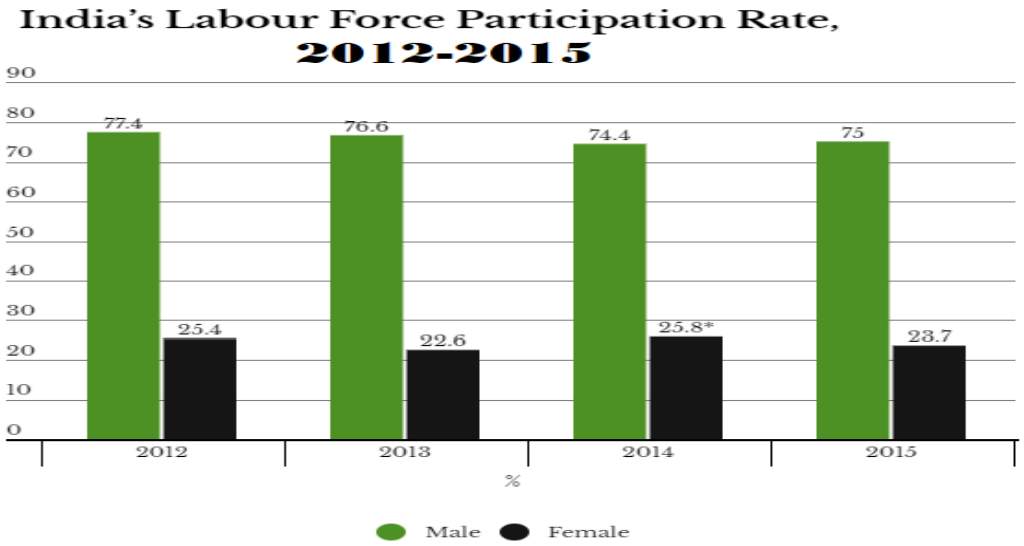

Fig 1: India's Labour Force Participation (2012-2015) (in %)

Source – Ministry of Labour & Employment Labour Bureau (2014)

1.2 India's Workforce Distribution

Almost half of the Indian workforce is employed in the agriculture sector, which is noted around 43.86% in the year 2018 and the rest of the population were distributed among the different sector (Saran and Sharan,2018).Even though agriculture has shown a declining trend but it remained the most dominating workforce sector. But the service sector plays a vital role in suppressing poverty than agriculture or manufacturing. The distribution of the workforce among different sector is depicted below.

India's Workforce Distribution across different economic sector (2008-2018)

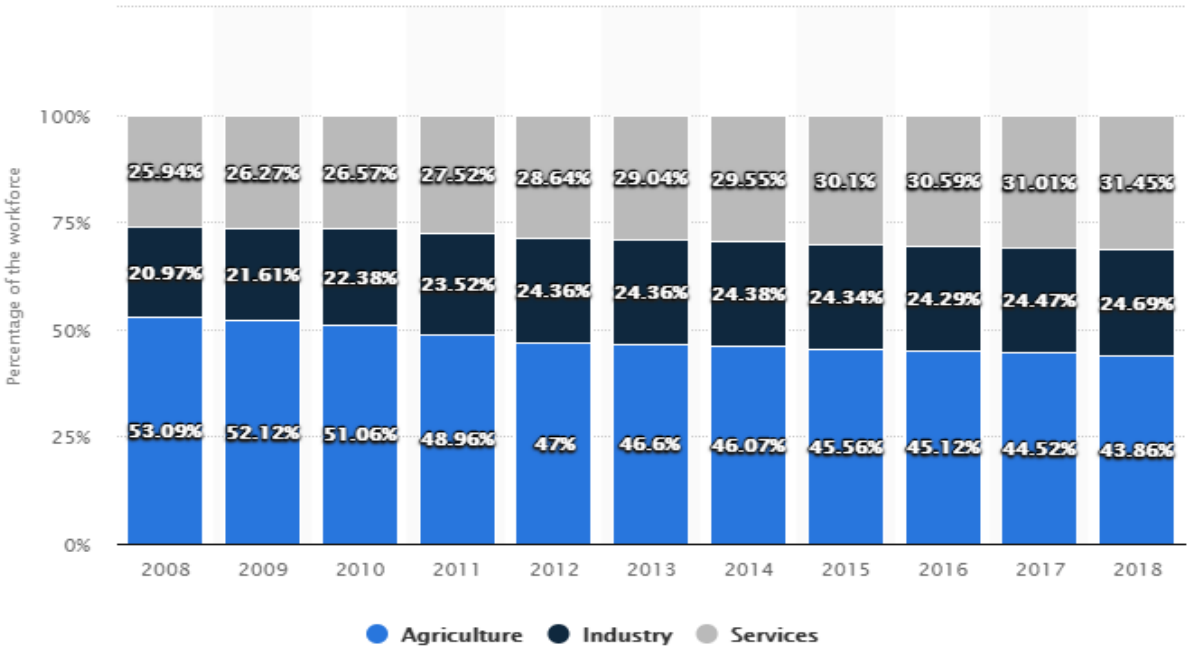

Fig 2: India's Workforce Distribution across different economic sector (in %)

Source: Plecher (2019)

1.3 Indian Women in Workforce: Trends and Facts

Half of the populations in India are women, but unfortunately when it comes to working force participation only one-quarter exist in the mainstream job role. As per National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) there exists a downward trend in workforce participation among women which is declined from 30% in the year 1983 to 22% in 2011-12. In the year 2017-18, the female labor force participation (LFPR) in India remain low at 23.3% which signifies that three women out of four above 15 years of age were either unemployed or not seeking any job opportunities ("50% India's Working Age-Population,"2019). As compared to 79% of men, only 27% of women were in workforce (Kher, 2019). The ratio between both the genders is very disappointing. Also between the years 2005 -2012 approximately 20 million women had dropped out of the workforce which is almost equivalent to Sri Lanka's total population (Biswas, 2017).

As per ILO Labour Force Estimates and Projections (LFEP) (2018), Global gender gap participation remained relatively low at 27% in the year 2018 as compare to 29.1 in the years

1990..Globally in the past 20 years, 345 millions of women were part of the workforce but still, they accounted for only 40% of the global labor force. There is notable highest gender disparity among South Asian countries like India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan and lowest among Nepal, Cambodia, and Myanmar (South East Asia).

1.3.1 Workforce profile of Indian Women.

Definition: **Workforce** constitutes the individual who is working (Ghai, 2005). The workforce of the study includes all those women who are currently working and having a child up to the age of 3 years.

Around 2.4 million women drop-out from the workforce between January – April in the years 2017 (Vyas, 2019). Reasons for such drop-out phenomenon vary from family obligations, social support, work conditions and many more. Women labor force participation decisions are affected by various factors like family preference, labor condition, and social acceptance. The National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) indicates that among urban females, the labor participation declined during the year 1987-2000 while in a rural area there have been reverse trends of increasing participation during the same period. Even though there is a considerable increase in female labor participation but there also exist an alarming rate of unemployment among urban females. There has been a notable shift in peak age of working women which changed drastically from 40 years in 1987-2004 to 35 years in 2011 (Klasen & Pieters, 2015)

Female Labour Participation Rates by Age-Group and Residence, Usual Status

Age Group	1993-94	1999-2000	2004-2005	2009-2010	2011-2012
Rural					
15-19	37.1	31.4	33.1	19.5	16.4
20-24	47.0	42.5	43.5	31.4	29.7
25-29	52.8	49.8	53.0	40.4	36.9
30-34	58.7	55.7	59.3	43.4	43.1
35-39	61.0	57.9	64.2	49.7	48.1
40-44	60.7	58.6	62.7	49.8	48.2
45-49	59.4	56.6	61.6	49.2	48.4
50-54	54.3	51.5	56.2	48.5	44.4
55-59	46.8	45.0	50.9	41.1	39.4
60 & above	24.1	21.8	25.4	22.6	21.3
All	**33.1**	**30.2**	**33.3**	**26.5**	**25.3**
Urban					
15-19	14.2	12.1	14.4	8.5	8.9
20-24	23.0	19.1	25.0	19.7	19.7
25-29	**24.8**	**21.4**	**26.1**	**22.2**	**25.3**
30-34	28.3	24.5	30.8	23.9	25.9
35-39	30.4	28.9	34.0	27.8	28.4
40-44	32.0	28.5	31.7	25.6	27.6
45-49	31.7	26.9	26.9	23.1	24.5
50-54	28.7	26.4	25.9	22.8	21.9
55-59	22.5	20.8	21.8	19.1	17.7
60 & above	11.4	9.4	10.0	7.0	7.8
All	**16.4**	**14.7**	**17.8**	**14.6**	**15.5**

Table 2: NSSO Female Labour Participation Rates by Age-Group and Residence, Usual Status

Source: Ghai (2018)

Declining Women from Work Force (2017-18)

Age Group	Decline Rate %
15-29	16.4
30-50	7
35-39	33.5

Table 3: Declining Women from Workforce (2017-18)

Source: Rukmini (2019)

NSSO survey also reveals that in the age group 15-29, there is a slight decline of 8% in the year 2011-12 to 16.4% in 2017-18. There is an average 7% decline in the women workforce

in the age bracket of 30-50 and highest notable decline were among the women in the age bracket of 35-39 with fall of 9% to 33.5% (“India’s Workforce,”2019)

As per World Development Bank (2017-2018) states that India been ranked among the ten countries with the lowest female labor participation.

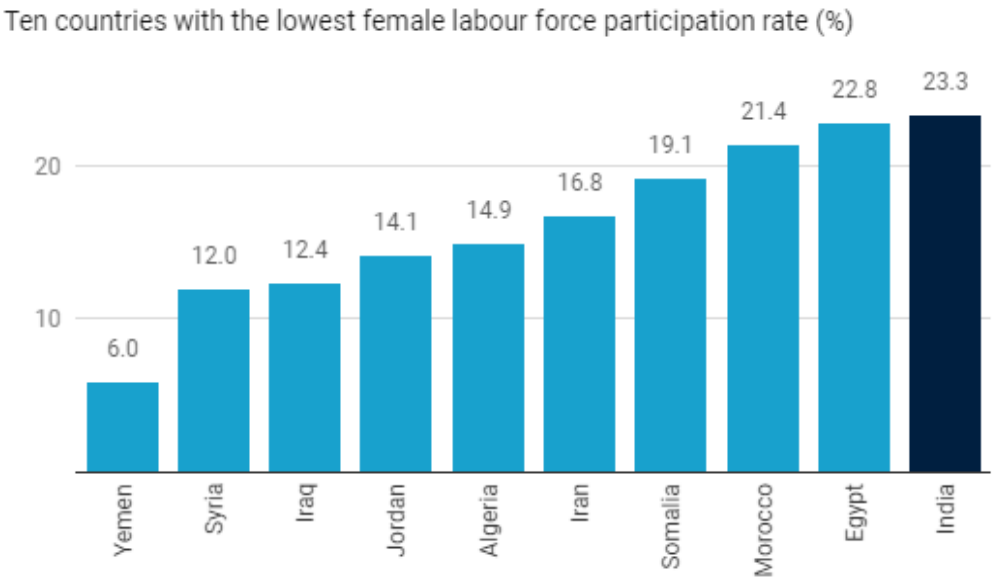

Fig 3: Ten Countries with the lowest female labour participation rate (%)

Source: Rukmini (2019)

The above data indicates that India has been ranked in bottom 10 with lowest female labour participation which is also a critical matter of concern among the policy makers. Notable facts of such downtrends among women are because of changing social norms, marriage, and household duties. It has also been noticed that most Indian women never come back post-maternity leave. The Centre for Talent Innovation Report (2013) revealed that Indian women find it difficult to gain back to career post the maternity. Even though there exist immense career opportunities but women fail to avail such benefits and quit the job. While some women manage to re-join the workforce, many forever get lost from the workforce. Grant Thornton’s International Business Report (2013) states that the existences of women in a senior leadership role in India were significantly low at 19% as compared to the global share of 35%. Women are underrepresented at this level despite the increasing entry of women into management and professional works. International Labour Organisation (ILO) reported in the year 2014 that 830

million women still have no access to maternity benefits, in the country like India only 1% of working women received such paid leaves (Lingam and Kanchi 2013). The lack of maternity benefit support may be one of the deterrent women face to stay in the workforce, other underlying factors like changing societal norms, economic barriers and access of opportunities also play dominate role for opt-out revolutions. These facts propel the necessity to look forward towards such gap and study the reason for women missing from employment scenario.

1.4 Role of Work Environment on Motherhood

When the number of women entering into the workforce increases, it becomes imperative for employing organizations to facilitate a supportive work environment to these women. Work environment plays a vital role in employees working life as it directly influences employees psychological and emotional well being, and therefore their productivity. As per Briner (2000) work environment consists of physical settings (heat, equipment, etc), job characteristic (workload and task complexity), organizational features (culture and history) and organization settings (local labor market conditions, industry sector, work-life relationship). When it comes to working women, earlier the work environment was limited to maternity benefits, flexible work option, and lesser strenuous work (in a few cases). With the recent inclusion of diverse workforce where more women are encouraged to join workforce, organizations have started facilitating them with extended maternal benefits, family-friendly policies, on-site daycare, safety transportation, gender parity career advancement and assistance for special needs. Many firms have come with new management practices to make the workplace better for women. However, such examples remain limited.

While most of the women enter the workforce before motherhood, they tend to leave the job post-maternity. The underlying problems of such exit are unwelcoming environment of the organization and domestic responsibilities. Women need to be accommodated with their social obligation at workplace. McKinsey & Company understood the early motherhood challenge and started paying off for their nursing mother's child and caretaker travel cost during development training. Also when organizations started drafting family-friendly policies, there was less attrition among women as noted in case of Google Inc, when the company extended their maternity benefits from 12 weeks to 18 weeks, attrition of women who entered

motherhood dropped by 50%. When women are the primary caregiver in Indian culture, it becomes challenging for women to stay in work without a supportive work environment. Consequently, the concept of motherhood and career combined with policies to create a supportive environment can further lead to lesser opt-out ratio among women.

1.5 Participation of Women in Service Sector

The service sector is one of the leading sectors of the Indian economy and this sector is the major contributor to India's economic growth and GDP. There exist wide varieties of activities within the service sector in India namely health care, education, business services, legal services, consultancy, construction, research & development services, accounting & audit, real estate, telecom and related services, storage services, port services, shipping, trade and tourism including hotels and restaurants.

There has been a notable shift of women from agriculture to the non-agriculture sector. As per the Census of India (2011) the workforce participation in non -agriculture sector has been increased from 31.6 % in 1981 to 41.6% in 2001. During the 1980s women were more engaged in traditional jobs and worked in the manufacturing domain. Women in service sector like education, healthcare, business services remained scanty. Education remained the vital sector for women as compared to other professions. Through socio-economic development, women start entering service industry beyond the education sector. Kotak (2018) women are better represented in the service sector and underrepresented in manufacturing ranging from 3% to 12%. Over 8 years from 2004 to 2012, the number of working women has grown drastically in the service sector. As per National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) women in the service sector in the rural area grown from 66 women per 1000 males to 83 and urban women in service sector increase to 495 women to 551 women per 1000 during eight years i.e. 2004-2012. The greater the participation of women in the labor force, the greater would be a competitive advantage for the economy.

The major industries in this sector, as classified by the National Information Centre (NIC), include financial intermediaries, insurance, real estate, banking, business activities, public administration, community, health, educational services, and others ("25 Service Sector," 2019). As reported by Press Trust of India (2017), among top 100 companies the highest representation

of women is in **IT/ITES services** constituting around 36% and secondly, 12% in **financial services** . The Indian Skills Report, 2019 conducted by people strong among 15 different sectors across the country reveals that women in banking, financial & insurance services (BFSI), automotive, Software, IT, hospitality and travel are expected to increase by 15-20% in the year 2019 (The Week,2018). In all, about 21 percent of urban working-age women were employed of them about 12 percent was employed in the service sector while about 6 percent were employed in the manufacturing sector (Rawal and Saha, 2015).The service sector is predominant in many parts of India with Chandigarh has a share of 85% followed by Delhi with 81.8% (India Budget, 2014)

Industry-wise changes in women's employment between 1999-2000 and 2004-05-Delhi

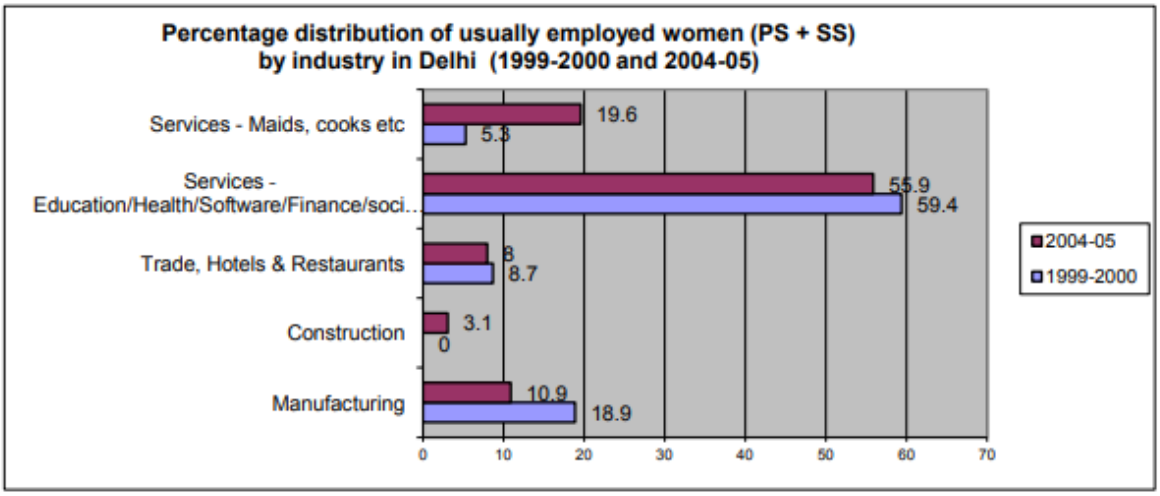

Fig 4: Industry-wise changes in women's employment between 1999-2000 and 2004-05 (in %)

Source: N, Neetha. and Mazumdar (2010)

From the above figure, it can be concluded that services like education, health, finance, software, and social services are more predominant among women in Delhi, followed by trade, hotel & restaurants .Also depicting a decrease in women participation in different industries during the year 2004-05. The phenomena of key falling of women from the workforce are thus a major concern.

The service sector is a key driver of any economy, so it's become substantially important to achieve gender parity and empower half of the population of India i.e women.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review aims to get an insight into studies already undertaken by researchers and to lend support in understanding the different theories, discussion and argument in the area of study.

Arlene (2014) defined literature review as " review of surveys books, scholarly articles, and any other sources relevant to a particular issue, area of research, or theory, and by so doing, provides a description, summary, and critical evaluation of these works concerning the research problem being investigated. Literature reviews are designed to provide an overview of sources you have explored while researching a particular topic and to demonstrate to your readers how your research fits within a larger field of study"

2.1 Motherhood-Career Transition

In India even though women share half of the total population, despite the fact only one-quarter of them contribute toward the workforce. There has been a marginal decline in women share in post year 2000 **(Venkatanarayana and Naik, 2016).** Despite the prospective job opportunity women still find it challenging to continue job **(Ravindran and Baral, 2014)**. As per the report of All India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE), 2017-18 the number of women enrolling in the higher education has increased to 45%; despite availability of such qualified women India still lag in female labor participation. There have been notable numbers of women leaving jobs, wherein qualified and professional women having childcare responsibility are opting out of the work to a great extent **(Belkin, 2003)**. It can be stated that professional women often face workplace conflict situations due to dual accountability of societal expectation and career role aspirations **(Kelan, 2009)**.

2.1.1 Individual Factors

By and large Indian women are more responsible for family and societal role irrespective of their work status. As per the Allstate report 2007, average women spend 11 years out of the workforce due to family obligation reducing her retirement benefits by more than $6,00,000.India having a collective culture impose much significance to family and social obligations **(Hofstede, 2001)**. Women are burdened with the family role at one side and on

another side; they are expected to mark their excellence at work **(Phang and Lee,2009).**The career interruption is a natural phenomenon in a woman's life due to her obligation toward child and elderly care, job shift of spouse and safety concerns **(Ravindran and Baral, 2014)**. To a larger extent participation of women in labor is influenced by their families **(Klasen & Pieters, 2015)**.

The married women age in India falls between 25-54 years with an employment rate of 19.6 %, the peak age among such population has seen a decline from 40 years in 1987-2004 to 35 years in 2011 the reason behind such reduction is the existence of young children **(Sudarshan and Bhattacharya,2009)**. One of the reasons for the stagnation of women in the workforce is that most of the women have children and actively look for family-friendly jobs to balance family and work commitment **(Herr and Wolfram, 2012)**. As per International Labour Organisation (ILO), 2016 approx 60% of women worldwide (nearly 750 million women) not able to get the benefit from a statutory right to maternity leave. In 2017, the government of India passed maternity benefits (amendment) act by extending the provision from 12 weeks to 26 weeks. The law also amended to extended maternity benefits to adoptive and commissioning mothers to avail benefits of 12 weeks leave from the date of delivering the child. Still, in India women constitute only 22.8% in the workforce as reported by World Bank Data (2018). The Team lease services reported in the year 2018 ,that employer is more apprehended to hire women due to the overhead cost of maternity provisions like leave reimbursement and support infrastructure also a major concern for not returning to job post-maternity(**Singh,2018**). The labor supply of mothers of young children is majorly affected by the availability of childcare facilities **(Chevalier and Vitanen, 2002)**. The more childcare support women received more would be a positive work-life balance **(Patel., Govender., Paruk and Ramgoon, 2006)**.

2.1.2 Socio –Cultural norms

Socio cultural norms consist of societal values, lifestyle, and customs. It is an expected behavior or thoughts about specific cultural or social group which is based on shared beliefs. Such norms collectively define the acceptable behaviour and approach of both the genders in the society reforms**(Elson,1991)**

Due to change in the socio-economic characteristic of Indian population there has been the notable entry of women in the workforce **(Klasen and Pieters, 2015)**. The rise in education

and increasing white-collar services leads to increased earning capacity of women and reduced the societal stigma **(Goldin 1994; Mammen and Paxson 2000, Blau and Kahn 2007)**. Due to this kind of conflict in work and societal expectation of the primary caregiver, mothers tend to opt-out from the workforce than non- mothers or men **(Cha, 2013)**.Social Institution plays more influential role to restrict women toward the accessibility of opportunity, authoritative position **("Social norms and gender",2018)**.

Longhurst (2008) stated that women's preference for paid work is constrained by interplay between socio-structural factors. Women desire to fit into the family commitment to limit their career opportunities. Due to this reason, women with young children are perceived as less competent as compared to women without children **(Legault and Chasserio, 2003)**.

As Indian society is collectivist culture, high importance is accorded to fulfilling family and social obligations **(Hofstede, 1980 as Cited in Ferreira, Serra and Pinto,2014)**. The social support of working mothers is vested around two-dimension: (1) closeness of relationship (2) control over flexibility. These dimensions are classified under the clusters of (a) husband (b) workplace (c) family (d) child (e) government support **(Phang and Lee, 2009)** of which husband support is a major determinant of social support and reinforces women to continue job post motherhood **(Herr and Wolfram, 2012)**. Improved work-family policies and change in societal norms may decline the opt-out ratio of women from the workforce due to motherhood transition (*ibid*).

2.1.3 Organisational factors

Many companies have taken various measures to accommodate the working mother through flexible work option, daycare facilities for child and family-friendly leave policies but such efforts failed to enhance the career of women with children **(Barnard and Rapp, 2009)**. It is revealed in the study that the responsibility of childcare does affect the career continuity and work aspiration of women, but it occurs due to discriminating workplace reality **(Maheshwari and Joseph, 2018)**. The career outcomes and women re-entry are also affected by organization policy like work-family policies, inclusive diversity environment and dynamic organization justice **(Ravindran and Baral, 2014)**. While on the organization part, the inflexibility of the work environment is a major deterrent for working mother to stay out of the workforce **(Herr**

and Wolfram, 2012). An organizational environment with long working hours, prejudiced working environment and perceived incompetence causes barriers for women's mobility in career progression **(Susan S and A.Enz, 2016)**. As per the National Partnership for Women & Families (2009), every 4th women who joins post-child birth faced biasness from the employer for their work commitment and ability to perform the job. Recent research conducted by Ashoka University in association with Genpact Centre for Women's Leadership (GCWL) in 2018 revealed that 50% of Indian women at age of 30 years leave the job for childcare and among them 40% exit workforce during maternity leave. It has been noticed that when it comes to development, retention, and advancement of women workforce, organizations often set back **(Susan S and A. Enz, 2016)**. Though companies try to retain the female employees by extended maternity leave, work from home option or flexible work option, the traditional approaches toward career make such flexible work options unacceptable among many firms.

Ang (2007) revealed in his study that it was nevertheless easy for mothers to return to paid work. As work they were offered are low status and low paying jobs compared to their pre-motherhood jobs. The mother faces many constraints from the labor markets as they are forced to accept the part-time, temporary or casual jobs. On the contrary, due to childcare obligation mothers look for flexible work option so that they can be in the workforce or completely stay out of the workforce.

So it can be concluded that labor force participation is the outcome of women's preference, her family consideration along with the suitability of women in particular employment which is socially acceptable **(Klasen and Pieters, 2015)**.

2.2 Motherhood and Career Transition phase

Today career can be defined as a continuous process of learning and development which fosters the employee overall development. **Weinert (2001)** states that career are a mix of individual work experience and a series of stages and transition from one phase to another. It can be learned that every individual has different issues during each stage of a career. When it comes to career development, individuals experience growth and progress in his or her career which is essential for upward mobility **(Gyansah and Guantai, 2018)**.

H.Ibarra (2004) in her research paper defined transition as leaving a role or identity simultaneously without completely parting and at the same time entering another without fully being part of it. She further explained career transition as a process of change in which change takes place in individual roles or changing pattern of an existing role.

There are two forms of career transition

1 Horizontal – Change of job from one field to another

2 Vertical – Moving upward or downward in the same job.

Mathis & Jackson (2011) in their book stated that there are four stages of career development including early career, mid-career, late-career and career end stages. Each stage were further categorized age-wise, need-based and concerns wise. At early stage individual with age group of 20+ are often look for job identity and prospective opportunity and more concerned toward the learning and external rewards. In mid-career stage individual, with age group 30-40 years are more are in career-advancing stage and may have limited options and growth opportunities. At this level, the employee is more concern about well being, value contribution, and integration. In late career i.e 50+ years and career end-stage (60-70 years), individuals look more for leadership and mentorship role and are concerned for retirement plans, disengaging activities, etc. The author further added that developing a career path of employee's aid organizations to retain key resources.

The challenges faced by women are more intense during mid-career as during this phase they juggle between family and work commitments **(Cole, 2016)**. The decision to enter in maternity by working women is seen as a negative step and also not acceptable both by management and society **(White, 1995)**. Many companies take in women at entry-level but when it comes to advancing in the senior leadership role there exists stagnation and slow growth **(Angelovska, 2019)**. The organization plays a significant role in the career development of an individual with upward and horizontal mobility. Women who are planning to have child either opt-out from workforce or look for part-time work option and most often give up on promotions due to time and devotion constraints, such decisions further affect their career advancement

(Budig & England, 2001; Avellar & Smock, 2003; Budig & Hodges, 2010; Waldfogel, 1995; Waldfogel, 1997)

McIntosh, Mc Quaid, Munro and Dabir-Alai (2012) identified in their study that motherhood has a deterrent impact on the career progression of women. The degree of the constraint depends upon the school-age children, younger the child the more is the impact. The women with career break of more than two years face more restrictions and dejection to join back the workforce and the part-time work commitment further reduce the career progression of such women. *Penalties of Motherhood* are a term described by **Waldfogel (1997)** as detrimental in women career progression.

Wise (2003) and Coyle (2003) identified in their study that when parents return to full-time they are likely to suffer disadvantage over their long term career goals as they missed out early career phase as compared to men or women without dependent children. There exists an association between women's attainment in human capital and their career breaks. A career break is mostly happening due to childcare responsibilities which further have a negative impact on women career upward mobility and long term career advancement as compared to the male counterpart.

It has also been identified that a supportive work environment plays a more significant role as compare to paid maternity for women to stay back in the workforce **(Phang and Lee 2009).** Further to ensure gender equality and enhance the performance of women returning to work, an organization should execute career mentoring and training workshop for returning women **(Bharathi and Baral, 2014)**. Such challenges are more predominant during the mid-career stage when both family and work have a negative interaction **(Anderson, Vinnicombe and Singh, 2010; Metz,2005; Sullivan and Mainiero,2007)**, women tend to have higher career break or opt-out as compare to men at this phase (**Susan S and A. Enz, 2016**).

2.3 RESEARCH GAP

The literature review states the challenges working women face during her motherhood phase. Through the review, it has been discovered that motherhood is one of the major deterrents

of women leaving the workforce. Even though women enrolment tends to increase in higher education but they still lag to make an impression in the workforce. It has been identified through the review that major contributor for opt-out phenomena among women is motherhood penalty. Despite statutory benefits and organization policies, women are still dropping out of the workforce. The changing societal norms like lack of childcare facilities, family obligations, unsupportive organization policy and inflexible work environment are key drivers to push women out from the workforce. Many companies already have maternal friendly policies but such policies are clustered among a few multinational companies. The traditional and conventional organization still lags behind in such policies. Also, underlying social and economic barriers like the primary share of family responsibility, childcare and spousal support further limit the entry of women in the workforce while for mothers, childcare remains the major deterrent.

However, the major interruption in women's career happens at a mid-career when the majority of women enter motherhood phase and find it difficult to rejoin the workforce. Due to notable opt-out revolutions, few researchers have identified motherhood as the main antecedent of the women leaving the workforce.

Within the Indian context, such studies are still limited and also lack industry-specific generalization of the opt-out phenomena of working mothers. Based on the gap reviewed through literature survey, the study envisages to reveal organisational factors deterring women employment post maternity. The study may attempt to identify the push and pull factors striking women to choose between motherhood and career. The findings of the study will assist policymakers to attract, retain and appointment of mothers in the workforce and at organizations level, help in drafting policy framework to make motherhood an integral part of work-life.

3. DESCRIPTION OF TOPIC

In the past 20 years, women's life has changed dramatically; women are now actively engaged in the workforce and take care of children also (Baron, 1987). There held a notable shift in societal norms including more & more women entering the workforce, feminist movement and change in the pattern of family type. But such change is nothing but a mere extension of women role (Phang and Lee, 2009). With such significant entrance of women in the workforce, there has

also been a notable opt-out revolution which has been challenged that if it as reflection of woman with or without children (Kreides and Elliott, 2009; Graff 2007; Boushey, 2005).

Conceptual Model of the Study

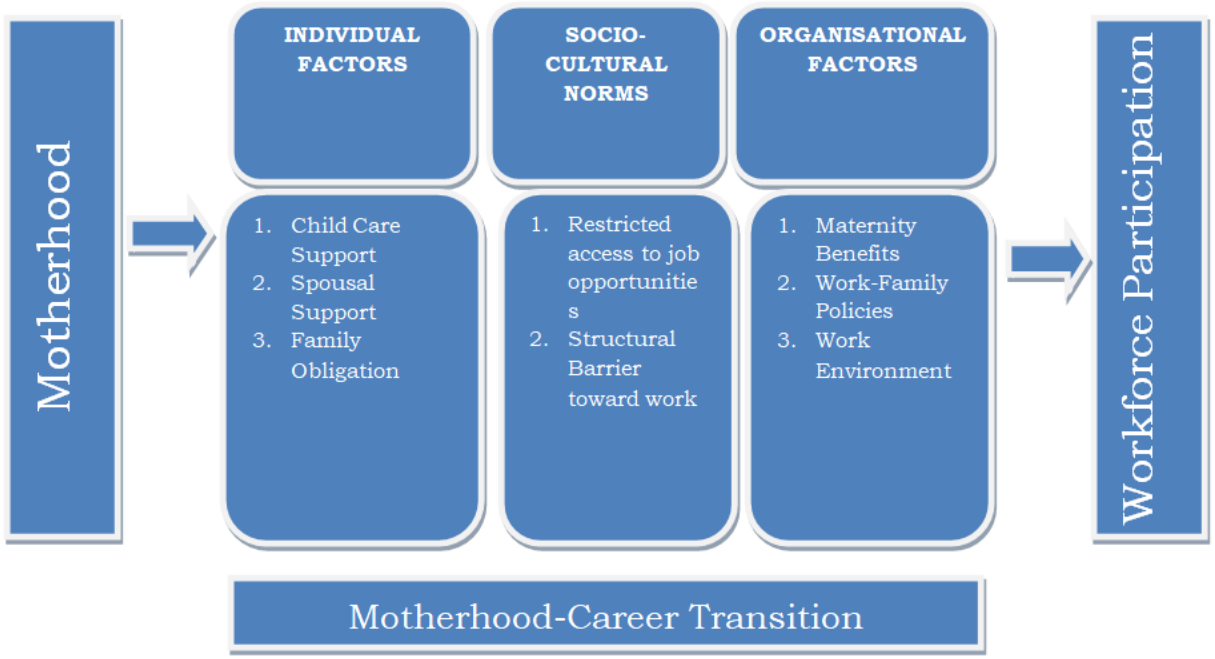

Fig 5: Conceptual Model of Motherhood-Career Transition

3.1 Motherhood

Motherhood is a major life event of any woman; it is generally defined as the biological tendency of women to give birth to a child. Now a day's motherhood is defined beyond biological factor and it has been defined as social construct mechanism which constitutes of the microform i.e. mother & child relationship and macro factors including socio-economic relationships (Glenn, 1994; Phoenix, Wollet and Lloyd, 1991; Thurer, 1994).

As per **Felfe (2012),** the motherhood stages can be classified into two different phase

(1) 0-35 months of childbirth – During this period, most of the mothers get the maternity leave and can stay at home without losing the job as they can rejoin the current job post-maternity leave.

(2) < 36 months - A mother loses her current job if she does not return to work.

The motherhood is a matter of choice among the social, cultural and political priority of a woman. Most of the women during motherhood are seen as less competent due to their childcare commitments. In the traditional culture of India, women are vested with family responsibilities and often sole caretaker of child irrespective of women work status. Woman face backlash from the employer and her career progression got disrupted if she chooses motherhood over career. In the reverse scenario, a career ambitious women fail to get societal applaud for choosing career over motherhood. It is evident through many studies that primary responsibility of childcare are entrusted on women, which further affect their career progression. In a collective environment like India, working women juggle to balance work-life and the magnitude of such an increase when women enter into motherhood.

3.2 Motherhood as Career Constraint

It has been noted that female labor participation begins to drop during the first year of pregnancy and start regaining post that. Most of the women get forever lost from the workforce due to social exclusion and discriminatory organization practices owing to motherhood.

Aguero and Marks (2008) in their study revealed that female workforce participation is negatively associated with different stages of motherhood. Despite the economic growth and higher educational status, in India women leave the workforce. The female participation remains low in recent years. Social norms attached with women play as a significant constraint on labor force participation in India. Household duties and childcare are often cited as a key reason behind low female labor participation in India. The family and spousal support play a vital role among women to stay back in work. When it comes to organization, women look for more family-friendly policies. Even though the government of India has implemented gender-sensitive policies to encourage more women to join the workforce, but women fail to avail to such policies.

All the above constraint including family obligations, childcare, lack of family-friendly policies and flexible work options force women to stay out of the workforce. While the effect of work-family conflict, gender discrimination, organization attitude toward women employees and career breaks has been widely studied but actual magnitude of such career breaks i.e motherhood

and its impact on the workforce has received less attention. Thereby it's become significant to study the motherhood and its role on career outcomes.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the objectives of the research study:

1. To identify the features of motherhood-career transition and its outcome on workforce.
2. To examine the impact of motherhood on individual women and its cumulative effect on women's career.
3. To analyse the socio cultural norms affecting maternal employment.
4. To understand the provisions of organizations with respect to hiring/ retaining women post maternity.
5. To recommend a set of initiatives to organizations to retain working women post maternity.

5. METHODOLOGY TO BE ADOPTED

The research methodology is a set of specific procedure used to identify the process and analyze the data of the topic. **As pe**r Ritchie and Lewis (2003) stated that study generally start with rough idea then systematic review is developed with more specific questions which further bring clarity to researcher to take the study further. The research process majorly consist of six steps including research questions, methodology, collections of data, data analysis & interpretation and last, report writing (Rubin and Babbie, 2010 and Thyer ,2010)

In this section, the methodology used will be defined along with sampling plan and data analysis method will be discussed.

5.1 **Research Design**

In this study, **exploratory research** design will be incorporated as to gain the initial understanding of motherhood-career transition and disseminate knowledge of the topic. To test the feasibility to undertake such as extensive study and to establish more focused research questions/hypothesis for additional investigation **exploratory research** will further take into consideration. A further **descriptive research** design will be chosen for the study, as a major

emphasis is to describe the particular phenomena through understanding its relationship and properties. The descriptive research is carried out with a specific objective which reflects definite conclusions in the later stage (R Paneneerselvam, 2011). It will illustrate the accurate profile of individual, events or situation (Robson, 1993).The problem of low female in the workforce is broad and study on the impact of motherhood on the workforce is new concerns. In this study firstly, exploratory research will determine whether or not phenomena of motherhood-career transition exist. Secondly, the descriptive approach will be used to report the happening or whatever happened earlier without any control over variables.

To examine the phenomena of motherhood-career transition in the selected service sector & to shed light on current issues women are facing related to motherhood-career transition, both qualitative and quantitative i.e mixed approach will be considered in the study.

5.2 Qualitative and Quantitative Research

The aim is to identify and understand the phenomena of motherhood-career transition and its impact on workforce participation, a qualitative approach will be considered for logical methodological choice and to strengthen the inferences quantitative methodology will be implemented.

5.3 Universe

The study will be conducted at the National Capital Region (NCR); the NCR comprises entire National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi and surrounding districts of neighboring states of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. The major cities of NCR included in the study are **Delhi, Faridabad, Gurgaon, and Noida**. Women from five predominant service industry including education; healthcare, financial, hospitality and information technology-enabled services will be surveyed through structured questionnaire using multi-stage sampling method.

5.4 Sampling Design

The working population in NCR is difficult to estimate while finding an exact number of working mothers is unfeasible due to the lack of reliable data sources. The consolidated sample of 250 approximately will be collected from women across 20 different organizations from service sector. The information will also be gathered from Key HR representatives from service

sector. Further, under methodological yardstick, such sampling designs are known as **convenient sampling.** Also, j**udgmental or purposive sampling** will be chosen for the study as the researcher has to make a deliberate choice of respondents based on inclusion criteria and identifying women who gone through the motherhood-career transition phase which includes those who are willing to provide information to contribute toward theoretical framework.

To identify the women who been through motherhood-career transition phase will be hard and impracticable. Also, due to confidentiality and company's restriction accessibility of HR personal will be difficult. In such a case, **the snowball technique** will be used to gather data by initially identifying the respondent who will further refer other respondents, this will allow the researcher to reach respondent which is otherwise difficult.

5.5 Method of Data Collection

The data will be collected through structured questionnaire. A pilot study will be conducted to check the reliability and validity of the research instrument. The interaction will also undertaken with key HR representatives of organisation of different sector including education, healthcare, financial, hospitality and ITES services to get more insight of organisational factors effecting women career post maternity.

Inclusion Criteria: Women having at least one child with the age group between 0 – 60 months (i.e newborn till 5 years of age) and must have *worked or working in* service sector from selected industries i.e. education, healthcare, financial, hospitality or information technology-enabled services with minimum a year of continuous service will be included in the study.

Exclusion Criteria: Women with child age beyond 60 months (5 years +) of age are excluded from the sampling.

5.6 Analysis of Data

The data will be analyzed with the combination of parametric and non parametric test as per the prerequisite of objectives. Demographic, psychographics and socio-cultural factors will also be analyzed for data interpretation.

6. PROPOSED OUTCOME OF THE RESEARCH

The restart of career post motherhood is not welcoming among Indian working women. While the participation of women in the workforce and education increased in recent years but still something is holding them back contributing huge gap in workforce participation. The study will describe the factors of motherhood-career transition and give remedial solutions to reduce career break among mothers. The recommendation based on the findings will assist policymaker to identify the issues of existing policies and make the necessary amendment to the policy framework for mothers returning to the job. The study will also shed light on the attitude of the organization toward mothers and identify the effectiveness of mother-friendly policies. Overall the study will indentify and analyse the cumulative effect of motherhood on women's career progression.

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Registration Number : 18/RMD/050

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